Special drive to Detect and Deport Foreigners

*23. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:†
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have asked the State Governments to launch a special drive to detect and deport 11,500 Pakistanis overstying in India after the expiry of their travel documents;

(b) whether similarly the silent and continuous intrusion into India by 20 million illegal Bangladeshis is a matter of concern;

(c) what concrete steps are proposed to be taken to deport these illegal intruders;

(d) the number of persons from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and other countries' citizens who are overstaying in India as on 1.1.2003;

(e) whether anyone of them is suspected to be involved in terrorist activity; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and steps taken to nab them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Central Government have asked the State Governments to launch a special drive to detect and deport Pak nationals overstaying in India after expiry of their travel documents.

(b) There are reports of large scale illegal influx of Bangladeshi nationals who manage to infiltrate into the country inspite of checks and controls at the international border due to the long open and porous nature of the border, which is a matter of concern to the Government.

(c) State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have been asked to launch special drives under sec. 3(2) (c) of the Foreigners Act,

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri C. Ramachandraiah.

1946 to detect and deport all foreign nationals including Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals illegally staying in the country. Besides, this matter is being taken up diplomatically with the Government of Bangladesh at various levels.

(d) As on 30.12.2001, 55,171 foreigners were overstaying in India out of which the number of nationals of Pakistan are 7945, Bangladesh are 24,443 and Sri Lankan are 620.

(e) and (f) The possibility of involvement of some of the overstaying/ missing foreign nationals in terrorist activities cannot be ruled out. State Governments and various agencies concerned take all measures to track down and intercept/arrest such elements.

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, the problem of refugees overstaying in this country is a serious one. We should have cordial relations with our neighbours, especially with Bangladesh. And Bangladesh has been conferred with the Most Favoured Nation. In the interest of our country, we should not allow Bangladesh to become a nerve centre of ISI activities. This problem has to be solved in a very cordial atmoshphere. The Government of Bangladesh has also made some gestures towards creating friendly atmosphere. Yesterday, we read in newspaper that the Government of Bangladesh has banned a militant organisation which is being financed by one Bombay-based don. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh was in Delhi recently. I want to know the attitude of the Government of Bangladesh in regard to deportation of the Bangladeshis who are staying illegally in this country. What decision has been taken in this regard; and, what is the approach of the Government of India in sending back those people who are refugees or who are staying illegally in this country?

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I fully agree with the hon. Member that there are Reports that there is a large-scale illegal influx of Bangladeshi nationals into the country. They are managing to infiltrate into this country in spite of checks and controls at the international borders, which are long, open and porous in nature. It is a matter of concern to the Government of India. This infiltration of Bangladeshis is not just a recent development. Sir, if you go into the history of this whole issue of infiltration, it goes back to 1920 and, later on, the people of Bangladesh illegally coming into our country...*(Interruptions)*... Yes...*(Interruptions)*...I am coming to that...*(Interruptions)*...I have got a record of it...*(Interruptions)*...Then, in 1947 and then in 1971...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, this is the most provocative statement...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Where was Bangladesh in 1920?...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, it was in 1947, India was divided...*(Interruptions)*...And Bangladesh was formed in 1971...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री सभापति: एक मिनट। ....(**व्यवधान**)....माननीय मंत्री जी, आप यह जवाब दीजिए। ...(**व्यवधान**)....

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, Bangladesh came into existence in 1971, not in 1920 ....*(Interruptions)*.... What are you talking? ....*(Interruptions)*.... It was a part of the undivided India in 1920. The hon. Minister should understand this ....*(Interruptions)*....

श्री सभापति: माननीय मंत्री जी, एक बात सुन लीजिए। आप केवल यह जवाब दीजिए कि बंगलादेश के मिनिस्टर बीच में और हमारी सरकार के बीच में क्या बातचीत हुई? .... (**व्यवधान**)....

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Sir, I was misunderstood....*(Interruptions)*.... My intention was, during that period...

श्री सभापति: आप उस चेप्टर को छोड़िए। ....(**व्यवधान**)....

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, Bangladesh came into existence only in 1971....*(Interruptions)*..... The hon. Minister should know this....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, the present Bangladesh was part of the undivided India in 1920....*(Interruptions)*.... there was no Bangladesh in 1920....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: My intention was that during that period...

श्री सभापति: आप उस विवाद में मत जाइए कि बंगलादेश कब बना कब नहीं बना। क्वेश्चन इतना-सा है कि बंगलादेश के मिनिस्टर यहां आए, उनसे हमारी सरकार की क्या बातचीत हुई?

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the outcome of the deliberations with the Bangladesh Minister who visited India recently? ....*(Interruptions)*....

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, INCHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visited India and met our Foreign Minister. He had also met me. It was communicated to him that we are concerned with the massive illegal immigration that is being going on and we are also concerned with the fact that certain insurgent elements within the North-Eastern States have been going across the border and utilising the Bangladesh territory for carrying on anti-India activities. We expressed our concern as strongly as we could. And, he said that Bangladesh would take cognisance of it. And, we hope, the negotiations and the dialogue that goes on between Bangladesh and India would attend to both these problems. I would also emphasise here that Bangladesh is a name which evokes a feeling of warmth, cordiality and goodwill in the minds of every Indian right from the formation of Bangladesh. We emphasised this. But the problems that I, and the External Affairs Minister pointed out to him, certainly, affect the relationship. We would like to normalise it and make is as harmonious as possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Pranab Mukherjee.

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, I have not put my second supplementary.

श्री सभापति: अब हो गया। ....(व्यवधान).... There are so many important questions....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: In the course of the reply, the hon. Minister has said that the Government of India has asked the State Governments and the Union Territories to launch a special drive to detect and deport the foreign nationals, including Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals who are illegally staying in the country. I want to know the response of the State Governments in this regard. Have they started detecting these persons? What are the measures initiated by the State Governments to deport them back to their respective countries?

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, the problem of illegal migration is a problem which is confronted by many countries in the world. But, I doubt, if any other country, in the world, would be having the problem of the dimensions that we have in respect of illegal migrants from Bangladesh. Only estimates are there. And, those estimates are very large. They are really awful and

frightening. Therefore, when, a few months back, there was a Conference of Chief Secretaries and Commissioners of Police of various States, they unanimously decided that in order to effectively deal with the problem of internal security, this particular problem had to be focussed on, and a drive undertaken by all the States. Subsequently, this was endorsed even by the Conference of Chief Ministers, held in January. The process is proceeding. Hon. Members would be aware that a problem arose on the West Bengal-Bangladesh Border in Coochbehar, in which for several days the other side said that they were not Bangladeshis; they belonged to India; and they were wrongly being pushed back into Bangladesh by the authorities. But, subsequently, obviously, they realised that and they took them back. So, this was though a small incident, but it was the consequence of the West Bengal Government and the Indian authorities taking a firm stand in respect of illegal migrants.

श्री राजकुमार धूत: चेयरमैन साहब, पिछले दो सालों में सुरक्षा बलों और आतंकवादी गुटों के बीच कितनी मुठभेड़ें हुई हैं? उनमें मारे गये या पकड़े गये आतंकवादी वीज़ा लेकर भारत में आए थे या गैर-कानूनी ढंग से आए थे? अगर वे वीजा लेकर आए हैं और उनका वीज़ा समाप्त होने के बाद भी वे नहीं जा रहे हैं तो यह बहुत ही गंभीर समस्या है। राज्य सरकार में पुलिस की मुठभेड़ से ये लोग यहां से निकाले नहीं जा रहे हैं, इसके ऊपर केन्द्र सरकार क्या व्यू लेगी? कृपया राज्य सरकार को इस संबंध में स्ट्रिक्ट निर्देश देने की कृपा करें।

श्री सभापति: मैं समझता हूं कि इसका जवाब आ गया है। वैसे भी आपका प्रश्न अलग है। जो प्रश्न आप कर रहे हैं, वह इस प्रश्न के दायरे में नहीं आता है।

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, may I know from the hon. Home Minister whether the issue of migration--of course, illegal migration--from Bangladesh, and the issue of victimisation of a small section of Hindus after the change of Government in Bangladesh were raised during his talks with the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. Also, to prevent the infiltration and illegal migration from Bangladesh, a series of measures were to be taken, including the fencing of the borders because the border is very long and porous; providing some sort of identity cards in order to prevent harassment of Indian citizens because the people belonging to both sides are ethnically the same, their language is same, and in most parts their religion is also the same. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any steps have been taken by the Government, especially in regard to fencing of borders and providing identity cards to the Indian citizens in order to prevent the harassment of genuine citizens.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, the hon. Member has really identified various aspects of the problem. He has also pointed out what kind of remedies could be applied to them. The Government of India is consciously dealing with each of these aspects, whether it is fencing of the border, or, it is the issue of proper identification and providing of identity cards. All these are parts of the entire gamut of the measures and steps that the Government of India is taking to deal with this problem. In fact, these things were also discussed in both the conferences that I have referred to, that is, the conference of Chief Secretaries and Commissioners of Police and the Conference of Chief Ministers. A pilot project for issuing identity cards has already been implemented in 13 States. We hope to cover the whole country in the course of time, and to have a National Register of Citizens' Development.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we agree with the hon. Minister that it is indeed a very serious problem. We also agree that the internal security-related steps that we take have to be coupled with some kind of a political initiative. But what we find a little disturbing here is that the credibility of our position will depend vitally on how we are able to gather facts. Till now, there are no firm figures and we are going only by estimates, and we, generally, refer to the estimates as frightening. No doubt, by this, we will not in any way belittle the dimension of this problem. But, I think, it is equally important for us to come out with firm figures, and we should have the estimates of all the nationals of the neighbouring countries where infiltration is taking place, because of socio-economic reasons as well. So, I think that point needs to be emphasised. I would like to have a broad time-schedule from the Government in this regard. By what time would the Government be able to come out with the correct figures? In the absence of figures, there is also a scare campaign going on. We have to deal with the problem in the right earnest. None of us is holding any brief for illegal immigration. But, at the same time this should not be misused against genuine Indian citizens. So, to ensure this, when will the Government be able to come out with some kind of a concrete, dependable estimate about the infiltrators?

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, no time-frame can be given for identifying figures because we have to rely mainly on the State Governments for these figures. And very often figures from the State Governments are not forthcoming. In many States, some of them are,

obviously, illegal migrants of Bangladesh, which is evident from many facts. But, they have got ration cards, they have become voters in the electoral rolls, so, whatever action of deportation etc. has to be taken, it has to be taken under the due process of law; under the Foreigner's Act, and not illegally. Therefore, it is a continuous process. I can only say that they are five or six States where the number is in six digits. There are colonies of Bangladeshis. On the border itself, the problem is of a different nature. In the Nort-Eastern States also, it is slightly different because the composition of population on both the sides of the border is similar. But in other parts of the country it is very distinct, very clear that they don't belong anywhere here, and that they are Bangladeshis. Though they say that they are from Bihar or from West Bengal etc., in many cases, they are clearly Bangladeshis. Therefore, because of this nature of the problem, we are tacking it very systematically. But at the same time, the two conferences just now held decided to give a clear message to everyone that it is a matter in which the Government, State as well as the Centre is not going to just accept what is happening and we are determined to review the process.

श्री लालू प्रसाद: सर, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से कहना चाहता हूं कि जब-जब इस देश में इलेक्शन नज़दीक आता है तब पाकिस्तानी और बंगलादेशी आदि सब सवाल याद आ जाते हैं। हम माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहते हैं कि यह जिम्मेदारी किसकी है? भारत सरकार और विगत लोक सभा में जब हम थे, तब हमने इस सवाल को कई बार उठाया था। कलकत्ता और बंगलादेश का बॉर्डर खुला हुआ है और रोज लोग बाजार में सामान खरीदने के लिए आते-जाते हैं। महोदय, जो पाकिस्तानी नागरिक यहां आए और जब उनका वीसा खत्म हो गया और वे यहां रह गए तो क्या सरकार ने पाकिस्तान से बात की कि आपके नागरिक यहां हैं, इनको वापस ले जाइए या वापस ले जाने की कार्यवाही कीजिए? मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि राज्य-वार, स्टेटवाइज़ कितने पाकिस्तानी किस राज्य में ठहरे हुए हैं? कितने बंगलादेशी बाहर हुए हैं, सरकार ने इसका कोई लेखा-जोखा दिया या पता लगाया है या अंदाजे पर गरीब पकड़ने का काम हो रहा है? हम यह जानना चाहते हैं। आपने यहां पहले ऑफिसर्स की मीटिंग बुलाई, फिर मुख्य मंत्रियों की बैठक बुलाई, क्या आपने यह कहा है कि जिनके पास आईडेंटिटी कार्ड नहीं है, राशन कार्ड नहीं है, उनको निकालकर बाहर फैंको? यह तो बड़ा खतरनाक डिजाइन है। हम यह जानना चाहते हैं कि जो परदेशी इल्लिगल हैं, आपको याद होगा कांग्रेस राज में बंगलादेश से आए बहुत सारी रिफ्यूजी लोगों को हमने बिहार में, चन्दवारा में, चम्पारण में, बितिया में, गोपालगंज में बहुत सारी जगह इन लोगों शरण दी। भारत सरकार ने उनको शरण दी पैसा दिया और जमीन दी। एक तरफ तो हमारी नीति जो दुनियाभर में पीड़ित लोग हैं,

गरीब लोग हैं, सताए हुए लोग हैं। तो उनको शरण देने की रही है और दूसरी तरफ है कि अगर ऐसा आदमी कहीं पकड़ा गया तो भगाओ। यह दोहरी नीति क्यों है? क्या भारत सरकार ने कोई नीति बनाई है कि दुनियाभर, अगल-बगल कहीं से भी कोई आदमी यहां आएगा तो हम उसको शरणार्थी नहीं बनाएंगे? मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि स्टेटवाइज बंगलादेशियों की क्या फिगर है? बहुत सारे मजदूर, नौकरी करने यहां आ रहे और जा रहे हैं, मिट्टी ढोने वाले हैं, तो यह साफ-साफ बात हो जानी चाहिए और भारत सरकार को फिगर देनी चाहिए, नाम देना चाहिए राज्य सरकारों को ताकि उनका हम लोग (राज्य सरकार) पता लगा सकें।

श्री हरिन पाठक: सभापति जी, इन्होंने स्टेटवाइज फीगर मांगी है। जैसाकि गृह मंत्री जी ने सदन में बताया है कि यह समस्या बहुत लम्बी होने के कारण जहां भी बंगलादेशी और पाकिस्तानी नागरिक, हमारे देश के विभिन्न प्रांतों में हैं, उनके लिए एक कानून बना हुआ है "फारेनर्स एक्ट, 1946"। उसके अंतर्गत राज्य सरकारों को पॉवर्स डेलीगेट्स की गई हैं कि वे उनको आइडेंटिफाई करें, उनको डिटेक्ट करें और कानून के अंतर्गत, मैं फीगर्स दे रहा हूं, उन्हें देश से....

श्री सभापति: गृह मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि अभी तक इसकी संख्या तैयार नहीं हुई है।

श्री हरिन पाठक: संख्या मेरे पास है, अगर वे जानना चाहते हैं तो?

श्री लालू प्रसाद: सरकार के पास लिस्ट नहीं है। राज्य सरकारों से कहा जाता है कि अब आप लोग बिरनी के खोता में चारों तरफ नागरिकों में हाथ लगाओ, आइडेंटिटी कार्ड बनाओ। यह दूसरी बीमारी पैदा की जा रही है।

श्री सभापति: एक बात सुन लीजिए, यह समस्या आज की तो है नहीं।

श्री लालू प्रसाद: सर वह बात नहीं है। यह कहा जा रहा है कि अपने-अपने राज्य में अब आप लोग पता लगाओ। चले जाओ मुस्लिम मोहल्ले में, चले जाओ उस मोहल्ले में उस मोहल्ले में तो बड़ा भारी नागरिक का सवाल है। आपके पास काम है तो दीजिए राज्य सरकार इसको क्यों पेश करेगी?

श्री सभापति: देखिए, इसमें हिन्दू भी हैं, मुसलमान भी हैं, यह समस्या आज की नहीं है। गवर्नमेंट ने अब निश्चय किया है कि अब इनकी लिस्ट बनाई जाए, आईडेन्टिफिकेशन किया जाए, आईडेन्टिफिकेशन हो रहा है।

*24. [*The questioner (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) was absent for answer vide page...30.*]